

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently Amended) An information sharing apparatus, which communicates with at least one terminal corresponding to ~~a first user~~ one of users, comprising:

an acquiring unit configured to acquire ~~a second~~ an information item which includes an image of a person's face ~~a personal information item~~;

an extracting unit configured to extract a contour of the person's face ~~the personal information item~~ from the ~~second~~ information item, to ~~obtain extracted~~ detect the image of the person's face as a personal information item;

a generating unit configured to generate an anonymous information item by deleting the personal information item from the ~~second~~ information item;

a first storing unit configured to store the ~~extracted~~ personal information item and the anonymous information item;

a second storing unit configured to store a first access level which is assigned to a first group of users of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item, and to store a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item;

a receiving unit configured to receive a request message for accessing the ~~second~~ information item, the request message being transmitted from the terminal;

a first transmitting unit configured to transmit only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item to the terminal in response to the request message, when an access level predetermined to the one of the users ~~first user~~ is equal to the first access level;

a synthesizing unit configured to synthesize the personal information item with the anonymous information item, to obtain a regenerated ~~second~~ information item; and

a second transmitting unit configured to transmit the regenerated ~~second~~ information item in response to the request message, when the access level of the one of the users ~~first user~~ is equal to the second access level.

3-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising a third storing unit configured to store a pair of IDs of each of the ~~extracted~~ personal information item and the anonymous information item~~[[;]]~~,

wherein the synthesizing unit includes:

a second acquiring unit configured to acquire one ID of the pair, based on another ID of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the anonymous information item; and

a third acquiring unit configured to acquire the ~~extracted~~ personal information item which corresponds to the one ID and is to be synthesized ~~synthesize~~ with the anonymous information, from the first storing unit.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the generating unit ~~generate~~ generates the anonymous information item by overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal information item with in arbitrary symbols.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method for sharing ~~[[an]]~~ acquired information items with a plurality of terminals corresponding to a plurality of users respectively, comprising:

acquiring ~~a second~~ an information item which includes an image of a person's face ~~a personal information item~~;

extracting a contour of the person's face ~~the personal information item~~ from the ~~second~~ information item, to ~~obtain-extracted~~ detect the image of the person's face as a personal information item;

generating an anonymous information item by deleting the personal information item from the ~~second~~ information item;

storing the ~~extracted~~ personal information item and the anonymous information item in a first memory device;

storing a first access level which is assigned to a first group of users of the users who can access only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item, and a second access level which is assigned to a second group of users of the users who can access both of the anonymous information item and the personal information item;

receiving a request message for accessing the ~~second~~ information item, the request message being transmitted from one of the terminals;

transmitting only the anonymous information item out of the anonymous information item and the personal information item to the one of the terminal in response to the request message, when an access level predetermined to a ~~first user~~ one of the users who ~~[[is]]~~ corresponds to the one of the terminals is equal to the first access level;

synthesizing the personal information item with the anonymous information item, to obtain a regenerated ~~second~~ information item;

transmitting the regenerated ~~second~~ information item in response to the request message, when the access level of the one of the users ~~first user~~ is equal to the second access level.

12-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, ~~which includes~~ further comprising:

storing a pair of IDs of each of the ~~extracted~~ personal information item and the anonymous information item in the third memory device[[:]],

wherein the synthesizing includes:

acquiring one ID of the pair, based on another ID of the pair, the another ID corresponding to the anonymous information item; and

acquiring the ~~extracted~~ personal information item which corresponds to the one ID and is to be synthesized ~~synthesize~~ with the anonymous information, from the first memory device.

17. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 11, wherein the generating generates the anonymous information item by overwriting into an area corresponding to the personal information item with [[in]] arbitrary symbols.